

## HOW USEFUL IS URINE PROTEIN IN THE DIAGNOSIS AND PROGNOSIS OF BREAST CANCER IN WOMEN?

NADHAM K. MAHDI<sup>1</sup>, HIBA QASSEM ALI<sup>2</sup> & MOHAMMED H. AL-JAWHER<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Microbiology, College of Medicine, University of Basrah, Basrah, Iraq

<sup>3</sup>Department of Surgery, College of Medicine, University of Basrah, Basrah, Iraq

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Is to assess the possible use of urine protein as a source of antigen in a serological examination in breast cancer diagnosis.

**Method:** This study enrolled 30 females, aged 27-70 years from Basrah Hospitals. Those women were diagnosed to have breast cancer by fine needle aspiration biopsy. Also 20 apparently healthy women from out-patients department were involved in this study as a control group. Urine samples were collected from patients and control groups and stored at -20°C. Blood samples were also collected from patients as well as control group, centrifuged and then serum stored at -20°C.

**Isolation and purification of antigen from breast cancer patients urine were done. Gel filtration chromatography was carried out after dialysis. Paper electrophoresis was performed by using cellulose acetate paper. Enzyme immunoassay for detection of antigen by serum antibody.**

**Results:** Urine protein was isolated by ammonium sulfate precipitation and purified by gel chromatography, then used as a coating antigen for detection of specific antibody in the serum of breast cancer patients by ELISA test. The readings of the optical density for breast cancer patients ( $0.82 \pm 0.24$  nm) was significantly higher than the control group ( $0.19 \pm 0.09$  nm), thus it gives a positive results for breast cancer patients and negative for the control group.

**Conclusion:** ELISA test by using urine protein coating antigen provide a hope for the development of non-invasive breast cancer screening and or diagnostic laboratory test.

**KEYWORDS:** Breast Cancer, ELISA, Protein, Women, Urine

**Received:** Nov 05, 2015; **Accepted:** Dec 23, 2015; **Published:** Jan 20, 2016; **Paper Id.:** IJMPSFEB20164

### INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is the third most frequent cancer in the world <sup>(1)</sup>. It is the first cancer leading death among females in Basrah <sup>(2)</sup>. Early detection of breast cancer by screening or early diagnosis of the disease has been linked to decrease in morbidity and mortality of the illness <sup>(3)</sup>. The available screening, diagnostic and prognostic procedures are either invasive (tissue biopsy) <sup>(4)</sup>, had a low efficacy (clinical breast examination) <sup>(5)</sup> or expensive (mammography) <sup>(6)</sup>.

Many serum protein have been used as tumour markers in diagnosis and prognosis of breast cancer <sup>(7,8)</sup>. The existing serum markers are of limited value in either screening or diagnosing of early breast cancer, but might be useful in prognosis and monitoring therapy of breast cancer <sup>(7,8)</sup>. Therefore, the aim of this study is to assess the possible use of urine protein as a source of antigen in serological test in breast cancer diagnosis.

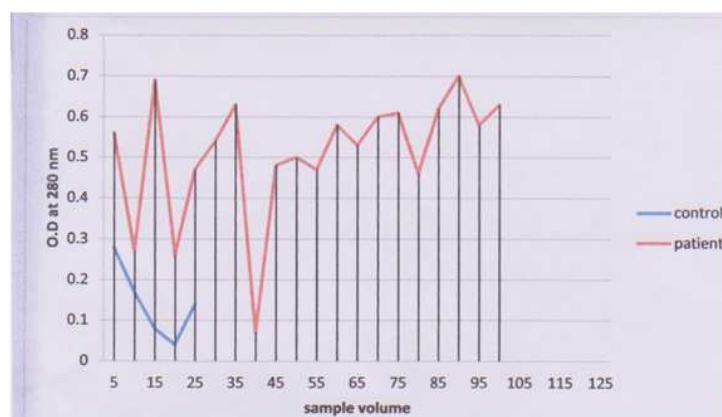
## PATIENTS AND METHOD

This study enrolled 30 females, aged 27-70 years from Basrah Hospitals. Those women were diagnosed to have breast cancer by fine needle aspiration biopsy. Also 20 apparently healthy women from out-patients department were involved in this study as a control group. Urine samples were collected from patients and control groups and stored at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Blood samples were also collected from patients as well as control group, centrifuged and then serum stored at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The work has been approved by the ethical committee of the College of Medicine, University of Basrah, Basrah, Iraq.

Isolation and purification of antigen from breast cancer patients urine were done <sup>(9)</sup>. Gel filtration chromatography <sup>(9)</sup> was carried out after dialysis <sup>(10)</sup>. Paper electrophoresis <sup>(11)</sup> was performed by using cellulose acetate paper (Fischer Science, USA). Enzyme immunoassay for detection of antigen by serum antibody <sup>(12, 13)</sup>

## RESULTS

Gel chromatography: The results of spectrophotometer readings of the purified protein from the urine of the patients group and the healthy control group were shown in Figure 1 that the crude protein consist of a number of protein components for both patients and control group samples. At the same time, most of the fractions of patients samples showed high optical density with a peak of 0.7, while such high readings not found in samples of the healthy control group (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Spectrophotometer Readings of the Purified Protein from Patients and Healthy Control Urine**

Paper electrophoresis: It showed a band at the same level of the band from the control protein papain (mw 23500 D), and another band appear at the level of control protein bovine serum albumin (mw 67000 D). No band appear at the level of the control protein ova albumin. Control samples express only one band at the level of control protein bovine serum albumin (Table 1).

**Table 1: Results of Paper Electrophoresis of Purified Protein from Patients and Control**

Control Bands	Patients Test Urine	Women Control Urine
Papain (mw 23500 D)	+	-
Ova albumin (mw 35000 D)	-	-
Bovine serum albumin (mw 67000 D)	+	+

Purified protein ELISA test: The results of ELISA test on the purified urine protein coated ELISA plate showed high level of readings from patient's samples with maximum reading of 1.57 nm, while the readings for the control group

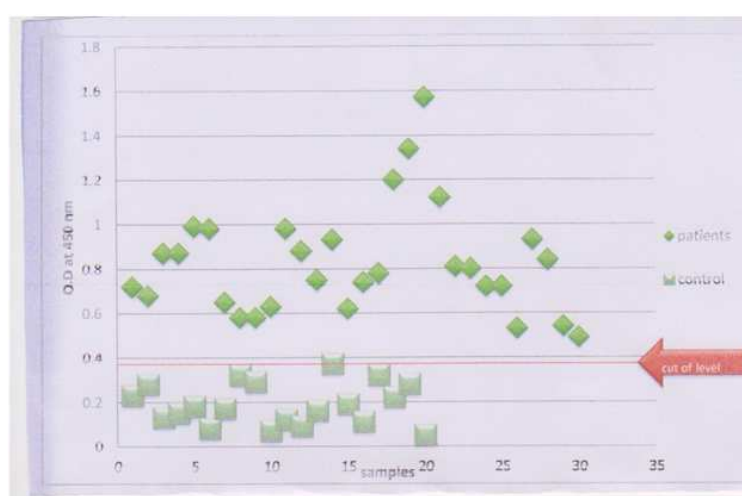
samples was generally low with maximum reading 0.37 nm. The mean of reading for the patients ( $0.8283 \pm 0.2442$ ) was significantly higher than that for the controls ( $0.19 \pm 0.09$ ) (Table 2).

**Table 2: Results of ELISA Test Readings for Patients in Comparison to Control Group**

Optical Density	Patients N=30	Control N=20	P Value
Mean	0.8283	0.19	< 0.05
S.D	0.2442	0.09	

The cut off value of the test determined by the application of the formula:  $(X+2 \times S.D)$  on the readings of the samples of the healthy control group.

Cut off value =  $(X+2 \times S.D) = 0.378$ . So the resultant readings from breast cancer patients samples in this test would be all above the cut off value (0.378) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: The Distribution of the Optical Density of ELISA Test for the Serum Antibody Detected for Patients and Control Group**

## DISCUSSIONS

Many studies focused on detection of protein in patients serum<sup>(14)</sup>, plasma<sup>(15)</sup>, breast fluid<sup>(16)</sup> and urine<sup>(17)</sup> as breast cancer markers. But they lack sensitivity specially for early stage disease and a lack of specificity. Therefore, the available markers are of no value in either screening or diagnosing early breast cancer<sup>(7)</sup>. As a result, this insist for continuous searching to reach a satisfactory noninvasive laboratory test for breast cancer screening and/or diagnosis.

Many proteins had been found to be over expressed and up regulated in breast cancer patients urine such as Matrix Metaloproteinase-9<sup>(18)</sup>, Survivin protein<sup>(19)</sup> and Epidermal Growth Factor-related protein<sup>(20)</sup> that act as a diagnostic and/or prognostic tumour markers. The present study demonstrate the beneficial use of urine proteins as an antigen for serological diagnosis of breast cancer to the best of our knowledge for the first time in Meddle East including Iraq. The results of urine protein gel filtration showed greater protein concentration in breast cancer patients urine than healthy control urine.

Paper electrophoresis reveal a protein band appeared almost at the level of the control protein papain (mw 23500 D) which is not found in healthy control protein. However, McDevitt *et al*<sup>(21)</sup> found protein with molecular weight

24000 dalton in urine of cachectic cancer (lung, colon, breast, prostate, cervix and pancreas) patients but they claim absence of the protein in patient without cachexia.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study demonstrate that ELISA test of purified urine protein for detection of specific breast cancer antibody in patient's serum was all positive for breast cancer patients, while the test was negative for the control group, with highly significant difference between patients and control group. McDevitt *et al* <sup>(21)</sup> detected a specific antibody for the purified antigen (cachectic patients urine protein) in tumour bearing mice serum. Whereas, the present study tested serum from breast cancer patients with a coating antigen from breast cancer patients only and at time of diagnosis with different disease stages. So, it was specific test for breast cancer and the readings that obtained from ELISA test display its ability to detect different disease stages. Thus, it has a value in diagnosis of breast cancer and it promises for the development of reliable non-invasive breast cancer laboratory test that may confer women (at risk) a simple and safe screening test.

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